

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-8 and 10-25 are presently pending in this application, Claims 16-18 having been withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner, Claims 2 and 9 having been canceled and Claims 1, 3, 7, 8 and 14 having been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-6, 8, 10-13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakano et al. (U.S. Patent 6,475,456). However, Claims 2, 7, 9 and 14 were indicated as including allowable subject matter; and Claims 19-25 were indicated as allowed.

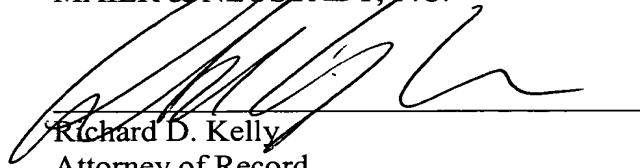
First, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that Claims 2, 7, 9 and 14 include allowable subject matter, and Claims 19-25 were indicated as allowed. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to include the subject matters recited in Claims 2 and 9, respectively, Claim 3 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 1, and Claims 7 and 14 have been rewritten in an independent form. Applicant respectfully requests that Claims 2 and 9 be canceled without prejudice.

Also, the specification has been amended in the "Background of the Invention" portion to correct the publication number of a publication discussed therein.

In light of the prior indication of allowable subject matter and in view of the amendments presented above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and thus the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests an early action favorable to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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